



USAF Talking Points The War on Terrorism

9 December 2002

Themes, facts and selected quotes from senior leaders and others, highlighting the contributions of air and space power in Operations Enduring Freedom and Noble Eagle.

Key Themes

Global War on Terrorism: We remain engaged in a fight against a determined and resilient enemy. "We will not waver, we will not tire, we will not falter, and we will not fail."

Coalition: Coalition forces have made and continue to make important contributions in the war against terrorism across the spectrum of operations.

Detainees: Approximately 625 detainees are being held in a facility at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. We will continue to hold individuals who have intelligence value or pose a threat to the United States or our allies.

Iraq: The conduct of the Iraqi regime is a threat to the authority of the United Nations, and a threat to peace. Iraq has answered a decade of U.N. demands with a decade of defiance. All the world now faces a test, and the United Nations a difficult and defining moment.

Enduring Freedom and Noble Eagle Operational Overview

- In the first 13 months of Operation Enduring Freedom, the Air Force team -- active, Guard, Reserve -- flew more than 64,300 sorties, or nearly three quarters of all OEF missions. Air Force bombers, fighters, airlifters, tankers and Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance (ISR) assets are in action daily.
- USAF B-1s, B-2s, B-52s, F-15Es, F-16s, A-10s and AC-130s have flown more than 75 percent of combat missions in Afghanistan, dropping more than 9,575 tons of munitions -- approximately 75 percent of the OEF total -- and damaged or destroyed approximately three-quarters of planned targets. More than 74 percent of the munitions tonnage delivered by Air Force aircraft were precision guided.
- In the first 13 months of combat operations in Afghanistan, there were more than 32,175 airlift missions. These missions moved more than 257,010 passengers and more than 342,340 tons of cargo from the U.S. to the Afghan theater of operations. The Air Force also delivered more than 600 detainees to the U.S. Naval Station in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba.
- The Air Force continues to provide full spectrum air and space support. Tankers have flown more than 14,925 refueling missions supporting aircraft from all services. C-17s have delivered more than 2.4 million humanitarian daily rations to the people of Afghanistan.
- ISR assets, including UAVs, Rivet Joint, U-2, AWACS, and Commando Solo, have flown more than 2,500 missions to provide persistent battlefield awareness.
- Over the skies of America, more than 15,000 airmen from the Air National Guard, Air Force Reserve and active Air Force participating in Operation Noble Eagle have flown more than 26,400 fighter, tanker and airborne early warning sorties in the past 13 months, including more than 325 CAP diverts and alert scrambles in response to actual events.

Global War on Terrorism: Since September the 11th, Americans have been reminded that the safety of many depends on the courage and skill of a few. We've asked our military to bring justice to agents of terror. (President Bush, 16 Oct 02)

- When the U.S. commits force, the task should be achievable and at an acceptable risk. It has to be something that the United States is truly capable of doing. (SECDEF, 17 Oct 02)
- Job one is the war on terrorism, and we're going to have watch that very, very carefully, as we do other things in the world that we have to do. (CJCS, 4 Nov 02)
- We are now engaged in a global war with an elusive and resilient enemy who does not employ traditional means of warfare. (SECAF, 30 Sep 02)
- The mission remains as it has been ... to hunt down and destroy terrorist cells inside Afghanistan, to work with the transitional government to prevent the reintroduction of would-be terrorist activity into Afghanistan, continue to train the Afghan National Army, and continue to work with Afghans to help them build a defense organization. (CENTCOM/CC, 29 Oct 02)
- There are about 58,000-plus Reservists right now, down from a high of about 85,000, that have been called up over the last 12 or 15 months in support of the global war on terrorism. (Dep Dir, Global Operations, J-3/Joint Staff, 28 Oct 02)

Coalition: The president has put together 90 nations in the global war on terrorism. It's the largest coalition in the history of humankind. It's breathtaking in its breadth and its depth. (SECDEF, 24 Oct 02)

- A lot remains to be done ... so we just have to keep working. The coalition that's been assembled is committed to doing just exactly that. And I think it serves us all from time to time to remind ourselves that the troopers and the sailors and the airmen from all these nations who are involved in that activity deserve our respect. (CENTCOM/CC, 29 Oct 02)

Detainees: If you don't want them for intelligence, and you don't want them for law enforcement, you don't need to keep them off the street, then let's be rid of them. And so that process goes forward. (SECDEF, 22 Oct 02)

- We have no desire to hold large numbers of these people for a long period of time. (ASECDEF/PA, 28 Oct 02)
- We do maintain a detention facility inside Afghanistan ... detainees we have probably represent between six and 10 nations. ... And yes, we do continue to get meaningful information on al Qaeda, as well as the structure of the old Taliban inside Afghanistan. (CENTCOM/CC, 29 Oct 02)
- People who pose a threat to the security of this country, to our friends and allies -- it's very important to have them in a place we can make sure they're not causing trouble. (ASECDEF/PA, 28 Oct 02)

Iraq: Iraq will either comply with all U.N. resolutions, rid itself of weapons of mass destruction, and in its support for terrorists, or it will be compelled to do so. I hope that Iraq will choose compliance and peace. (President Bush, 16 Oct 02)

- The burden of proof is on Saddam Hussein to prove to the world that he is in fact disarming, as he agreed to do a decade ago and as is now required by some 17 U.N. resolutions. (SECDEF, 8 Nov 02)
- With respect to Iraq, there's no new doctrine whatsoever. This is eleven years of old, and unfortunately, failed policy. (USECDEF, 4 Oct 02)
- Iraq is a state sponsor of terrorism. Iraq has weapons of mass destruction. ...The issue is the potential of a state with weapons of mass destruction passing those weapons ... to proven terrorist capability. And I believe that risk exists. (CENTCOM/CC, 29 Oct 02)